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FBI Frustrated in Search for Anti-Red Leader

Family of Eight Disappeared 16 Months Ago—Car Found

By ROBERT H. COLLINS
of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The mysterious disappearance 16 months ago of John R. Harrell and seven members of his family has been a frustrating case for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which has had as many as 100 agents working on it at one time, an authority connected with the search told the Post-Dispatch yesterday.

Harrell was the wealthy leader of the anti-Communist Christian Conservative Church. His automobile was found on a side road near Springfield, Ill., April 1, 1963. He was reported to have been carrying between \$14,000 and \$20,000 at the time of his disappearance.

Robert B. DePugh, national leader of the Minutemen and friend of Harrell, said he believed Harrell and his family are being held captive.

Dead or In Hiding

Some law enforcement officials believe that Harrell and his family are hiding. Others think they may be dead.



Associated Press Photo
John R. Harrell

Friend Believes Harrell Is Held by Communists or CIA

Shortly after Harrell's disappearance, DePugh offered a reward of \$5000 for information about the family's whereabouts. DePugh, Norborne, Mo., is president of Bioplac Corp., a pharmaceutical firm.

Questioned by FBI

DePugh said the FBI has questioned him many times about Harrell's disappearance. "FBI agents try to leave the impression they believe John is hiding out," DePugh said.

At the time of his disappearance, Harrell was en route to Springfield for a conference with officials of the Internal Revenue Service about income tax problems. Harrell operated a mausoleum and construction business. He had oil well and real estate holdings.

The FBI first showed official interest in the Harrell case last November when he did not appear for trial in United States district court at East St. Louis on charges of harboring an AWOL Marine.

In August 1962, the FBI and Illinois State Police raided Harrell's 100-acre estate at Louis-

"I don't believe it is possible for a man and seven members of his family to hide from the FBI this long," DePugh said. "It's almost impossible for one man to elude the FBI for that length of time, not to mention two women and five children." The FBI officially entered the search last November.